



Black Jack DFAC Opens Officially

By Pfc. Al Barrus
122nd MPAD

Mess halls have traditionally been a place where Soldiers are allowed to let down their guard as they break bread and share conversation. Soldiers celebrated a new place to break bread at the grand opening for the Black Jack Dining Facility.

The ceremony took place at Camp Victory North on Saturday, April 3. During the ceremony, 2nd Brigade Combat Team Commander Col. Michael Formica cut the ribbon to the newly opened building.

Before dinner, Soldiers gathered around the ceremonial ribbon where Formica and Sgt. Maj. Neil Ciotola, 2BCT Sgt. Maj. explained the history of the mess hall.

"It's a place where we can sit down and we can share a meal with our friends," Ciotola said. "What it is for us is the closest that we will come to what we call home. You and I might not see each other for days on end because we have different missions, but we can look across the chow hall and share a smile. We can share our memories, our frustrations and our hopes. That's what this place is."

Following Ciotola's speech, Formica presented awards of appreciation from the 2BCT to DFAC staff chefs and supervisors for their dedication to Buffalo Food Service subcontracted out of Kellogg, Brown and Root, and the



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2nd Brigade Combat Team Sgt. Major, Neil Ciotola gives a speech about the importance of chow halls as Soldiers wait for the ribbon cutting that celebrated the grand opening of the Black Jack dining facility on Camp Victory North.

respect and service they provide to the soldiers of 2BCT.

"The guys we recognized have been with their company since they opened up, when they were serving in trailers all the way up to this point," Ciotola said. "They are selfless, hard working, and they are just wonderful human beings. They treat every Soldier who goes through there with a far greater degree of respect than I would

have expected from any group of civilians out here supporting us."

After the awards were presented, the crowd moved toward a large cake in the shape of a 1st Cavalry Division patch. Formica commended the staff on the beautiful treat for the soldiers, and he took up a knife to cut the cake.

"Traditionally this is done with a cavalry saber, but I was-

n't able to bring one out here, so this will have to do," Formica said. Holding a long kitchen knife, he hacked the cake with two quick chops. The spectators laughed and applauded their commander.

The grand opening was originally scheduled to take place on Friday, April 2, but was postponed.

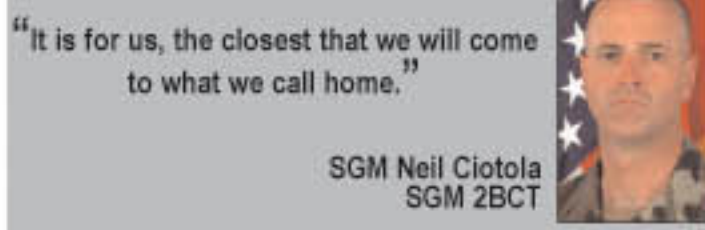
Special food was served for dinner on Friday, which included T-bone steaks, catfish and lobster tails, according to Lillian Robinson, assistant DFAC manager.

Some Soldiers wondered why the grand opening happened weeks after the building actually opened.

"We didn't have the grand opening on the same day as the opening because we weren't fully prepared for it," Robinson said. "Basically we didn't do it because we were waiting to get our kitchen open and do it all at one time. We wanted the dining room good and ready also."

The Soldiers enjoyed the grand opening none the less, and were just as happy to partake of the special meal the night before the grand opening.

"Our goal is to serve our customer, the Soldiers," Robinson said. "They are way over here in the Middle East in Baghdad and this is all they got. We try our best to make them feel as much at home as possible. I have a good staff. We're one big happy family."



Holy Week: Bringing Hope of Spiritual Life in the Face of Death

by Lt. Col. David Moran
ICD Chaplain

The stark and stirring display of rifles with fixed bayonets between boots with helmet and dog tags is unmistakable. A life interrupted. All too often, a young Soldier is taken by death and a family is left behind to remember and attempt to cope and heal from the tragedy and unthinkable loss. The heroic service of the fallen is commemorated in a visual metaphor that juxtaposes the ordinary—a few photos and mementos, their boots and identification tags—with the extraordinary life that is no longer seen.

The memorial services conducted in Iraq do not miss the opportunity to shed light on the life lived. To the contrary, the colorful stories, the rich personal illustrations, and the few vivid memories that are shared before friends and fellow comrades make it clear that each lost life profoundly touched those around them. The friends left behind seek and find purpose in the service and personal sacrifice, the willingness to go in harms way, the love for country, friend, and freedom. These themes are repeated again and again, in the testimonies of Soldier after Soldier, and reflect a deep compassion and love that is equally as unmistakable as the memorial.

A Soldier's life in Iraq reflects images of loss, death, and love in their day-to-day lives. Now, day-to-day life brings Soldiers, families, and friends to the Jewish celebration of Passover and the Christian celebration of Easter.

Unlike past Easters and Passovers, the services of this week will add something new, possibly troubling, yet something somehow richer to the memories we carry of past family get-togethers, Seder meals, sunrise services, and brunches. Like memorial services, these two celebrations confront us with profound messages declaring God's deliverance from death, his love for us, and the hope for resurrection life. Somehow, we need to revive these hopeful messages and retell them, especially in this context.

Combat in Baghdad does not take a holiday. Planning for combat operations is ongoing, uninterrupted, and continuous. Our guard against death cannot be dropped. Likewise, Easter and Passover planning orders are made in the same fashion as other fragmentary orders for the warrior missions.

Death is not far away and requires our full attention, but somehow gun trucks appeared to escort other vehicles which fell into the convoy that brought 11 Jewish Soldiers to join with

Commentary

others to celebrate a Seder meal and a Passover service while friends, Soldiers, and warriors protected them.

Warriors from 1st Squadron, 7th Cavalry who were given this convoy mission, treated it with the same seriousness of any other combat mission they conduct. Christian commanders, Soldiers, and chaplains joined in the effort to make sure that Jewish Soldiers could celebrate Passover in Baghdad.

Chapels come in many shapes and forms ranging from converted palaces, found spaces in pre-existing buildings, to abandoned tents no longer needed when other staff sections moved to better accommodations. Attendance does not correlate to the quality of the building.

For example, Second Brigade, 1st Cav. Div. Black Jack Chapel used to be a command post tent intended to seat 30. They now have to roll up the flaps and set chairs outside to accommodate the overflow.

Bible studies and prayer meetings are scheduled every night for those on missions or too busy to attend at other times. There's a women's bible study, a godly men's study too. The contemporary Protestant praise band cannot be contained in

their current tent so a new one is being built.

The war zone will make a difference. Many will be watching the walls and the neighbors beyond the walls. Many Soldiers and leaders will be unable to attend. Transportation on the base is often by foot. There will be more services rather than less to give more opportunities to find a service when you can get away; Holy week masses at mid-day too. The few priests will be traveling to locations without Catholic services. Again, warriors and aviators will draw the mission to transport the priests and execute it professionally. Commanders, chaplains, and Soldiers of all faiths will support it too.

You see, whether it is a good mission of transporting Jewish Soldiers to Passover, Catholic priests to Catholic soldiers, providing Holy Week services, or building a house of worship to spiritually sustain so many who are spiritually hungry. So many will find ways to give their service and sacrifice to protect the good, to enrich the lives of the living, to make lives full and purposeful. Warriors have the opportunity to build something spiritual in their own lives and in the lives of others. In this season of death, God stands ready to build, to strengthen, to redeem, and to feed.

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On the Home Front

Soldier, Dad Tells Story of War in Iraq to Kids

From the Killeen Daily Herald

KILLEEN, Texas- From explosions to anti-aircraft bunkers to stolen moments of sleep, Sgt. Jorge Uribe's photos tell the story of his time spent in Iraq, a story he shared with several classes at Fowler Elementary School. The captions and images in his PowerPoint presentation elicited "oohh"s and "whoah"s from the students, as Uribe, of the 4th Infantry Division's C Company, 299 Engineer Battalion, described life in the Middle East.

Uribe's sons Kevin Fuller and Joshua Uribe, both Fowler students, originally asked their dad to come speak to their support groups at school. His story was a huge hit, and he has been sharing it with the rest of the school since.

His presentation goes beyond headlines, war and weapons and shows people and experiences.

"This is what it's really like," Uribe said. Some of his photos of places and friends almost had a vacation photo feel, but Uribe's words portrayed the seriousness of the situation.

"Each time, mission after mission, we were always grateful to come back home safe," read Uribe's caption to a picture of the abandoned palace he lived in for half a year.

He spoke of always wearing his gear to stay safe and searching the roads for explosives. His young audience especially responded to the photo of an explosion destroying found ammunition. Uribe explained to them about anti-aircraft bunkers and pointed out a picture of a homemade gun



Sgt. Jorge Uribe talks with students at Fowler Elementary School about his experiences in Iraq. He is pictured on the right in his battle gear. He took photos during the year in Iraq and created a slide show to show children what it was like in the Middle East.

that was found. Uribe also showed pictures that he thought sent an important message to the students, a message that all Iraqis aren't bad. One photo showed a hungry Iraqi child running with meals she had been given by Soldiers. Another shot was an American Soldier posing with Iraqi soldiers.

"It's showing that there are people out there that are willing to work with us," Uribe said. And then there were photos that earned giggles from the crowded cafeteria. They were of Soldiers taking naps, Soldiers with messy hair and Soldiers singing when they got the word they were going home.

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4ID Soldiers With Money to Spend Benefit Killeen Businesses

From KCEN-TV

KILLEEN, Texas- With the return of thousands of 4th ID Soldiers, a huge cash flow has hit the city of Killeen and it's becoming a jack pot for local businesses. With a brand new sound system and 20-inch spinners, Sgt. Sergio Winston is cruising around Killeen in his new Jeep Grand Cherokee.

"Being gone so long, I felt like I deserved it," he said. "(I was) Not driving around like I wanted. I wanted to drive something big."

The 25-year-old was able to get something big because of the big bank account he accumulated while deployed to Iraq. Troops earn bigger paychecks for being in a combat zone, but after a year at war with no way to spend their earnings, Soldiers are enjoying big bank accounts. Winston, who returned home two weeks ago, said he has never seen so much in his bank account.

"Never that much at one time," he said. "There were a lot of things I wanted to do."

And Winston isn't the

Tim Tunstall is the Floor

Returning Soldiers are buying Cars, Motorcycles & Stereo Equipment

only 4th ID Soldier going on a shopping spree. He said a lot of his friends are busy buying up motorcycles, stereo equipment, and other expensive toys, which has local businesses smiling.

Manager at Dodge Country in Killeen. He said this past year has been hard on the Killeen economy.

"It slowed down a lot," Tunstall said. "You could tell they had deployed, especially when they started changing out divisions."

But over the past few weeks, Tunstall said, business has begun to pick up as more and more 4th ID Soldiers come in shopping for a new ride. "You can tell that they have saved a little," Tunstall said.

Sports/Leisure

Kids View Iraq

Continued from Page 3

Uribe's wife, Tanya Uribe, said her husband's pictures, including the more light-hearted, helped calm her fears when he showed them to her on his mid-tour visit.

"The news just shows the bad stuff," she said. "He came home and showed us the sentimental side of Iraq."

A show of hands at the presentation told of a large amount of children with loved ones still or recently deployed and the support groups at Fowler Elementary have grown in number from seven to 10.

Uribe said he hopes the children take away a little familiarity with the situation in Iraq and understand that it's

getting better. And for those children with parents who have just deployed, he hopes his words and pictures can put them at ease.

Fowler counselor Nancy Hoxworth said Uribe's presentation is beneficial to all the students, because it fits perfectly with character education and opens doors to conversation of virtues like citizenship, responsibility and generosity. And Uribe's story may especially strike a note with the children of deployed parents.

"We don't want to paint this rosy picture of the war," she said. "At the same time, we want the kids to have an idea why the adults in their life are making this decision and why

Today in History

April 7

From historychannel.com

- 1770 William Wordsworth is born
- 1805 Lewis and Clark depart Fort Mandan
- 1862 Battle of Shiloh concludes
- 1891 P.T. Barnum dies
- 1939 Italy invades Albania
- 1953 Hammarskjöld elected U.N. head
- 1954 Eisenhower gives famous "domino theory" speech
- 1975 North Vietnamese forces begin preparations for final offensive
- 1994 Rwandan massacres begin

Today in Cav History

1967 - Operation LEJEUNE begins.



TV GUIDE	AFN ATLANTIC	AFN PACIFIC	AFN Sports	AFN Spectrum	Scores
18:00	A Walk in Your Shoes/Strange Days at Blake Holsey High	The Late Show with David Letterman	MLB - SF Giants @ Houston Astros 17:00	Bull Durham 17:00	NCAA Men's Basketball Championship Game UConn 82 Georgia Tech 73
19:00	Jeopardy! Headline News 19:30	Access Hollywood 19:30	Sportscenter	The Wild Thornberrys/The Fairly Oddparents	MLB: Boston 4 Baltimore 1
20:00	ESPN News Headline News 20:30	Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman: The Movie	ESPN News/ Baseball Tonight 20:20	The Simpsons The Cosby Show 20:30	Florida 4 Montreal 3
21:00	8 Simple Rules for Dating/The Bernie Mac Show	Dr. Quinn, Medicine Woman: The Heart Within	Sportscenter	American Idol	Anaheim 10 Seattle 5
22:00	America's Next Top Model		NASCAR Nextel Cup Series	Star Trek: The Next Generation	FIRST TEAM